

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Elevated Fire Danger Brings Risk for Memorial Day Weekend

Sacramento – Sunshine and blue skies make this time of year perfect for camping and outdoor activities. With the Memorial Day weekend approaching, CAL FIRE reminds all Californians about the increased fire danger this year and asks everyone of to be extra careful in the outdoors.

“Holiday weekends are a great time for friends and families to go out and enjoy the outdoors, but we must all remain aware of the fire danger and the risks posed in the outdoors,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CAL FIRE. “We urge safety and preparedness when in wildland areas. California's extremely dry conditions are primed for wildfires, and it takes diligence from everyone to avoid sparking a fire.”

With one of the driest winters on record, officials have already seen a drastic increase in fires. In an average year, by late May CAL FIRE responds to approximately 850 wildfires. Already this year, CAL FIRE has responded to nearly 1,600 wildfires; that number is up 50% from last year at this time, when there were just under 1,050 wildfires.

CAL FIRE would like everyone to remember these important steps this holiday:

Camping:

- Obtain a campfire permit
- Check for local fire restrictions
- Clear away grass, leaves and other debris within a 10-foot perimeter of any campfire
- Have a responsible person in attendance at all times
- Ensure all campfires are completely extinguished before leaving
- When barbequing, never leave the grill unattended

With temperatures up, California's water ways are running high as remaining snow melts. Many take advantage of cooling off in local rivers, but this fun outdoor activity does come with risks. Drownings claim adults and children alike, and Memorial Day Weekend tends to see a spike in drownings. Under local agreements, CAL FIRE responds to hundreds of water rescues across the state each year and even the strongest of swimmers can be caught off guard by strong currents or cold water. Following these tips below can save lives:

In the Water:

- Always wear a life jacket!
- Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult
- Never swim alone
- Drinking and swimming is just as dangerous as drinking and driving.

For more ways to be safe during Memorial Day visit the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov.